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ABSTRACT

The initial black community response to the desegregation plan submitted by the School Department is contained in this document. The principal purpose is to make clear to the court that in evaluating this plan, or any other, improvements in the quality of schooling is sought. Efforts to rid the Boston schools of discriminatory pupil placement are supported, but racial balances or any rigid formulas for fixing the racial proportions in school buildings are not sought. It is believed that once discriminatory pupil placement is ended, probable instructional outcome should chiefly determine the character of all schools. The court is asked to verify the accuracy of the statistical data in the plan, to verify school department capacity and intent to implement the options that are essential to the plan, and to require procedures designed to prevent a variety of abuses that often attend desegregation. The procedures include: certification for, and placement in, special education classes; affirmative action; suspension and expulsion; multi-racial advisory bodies; and others. Certain questions are suggested to the court in examining the proposed pupil assignments on a zone by zone basis. The document closes by rejecting discussions of metropolitanism, at least, until discriminatory pupil placement has been eliminated in Boston. (Author/AM)

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BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE "STUDENT DESEGREGATION PLAN":

A RESPONSE

FREEDOM HOUSE
INSTITUTE ON SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

14 Crawford Street
Roxbury, Mass. 02121

February 3, 1975

UD 015 977

PREFACE

Since Phase I of Boston school desegregation went into effect in September, there has been much effort in the Black community directed towards its peaceful implementation. At the same time, however, numerous agencies and organizations have been looking toward next year's desegregation plan, Phase II, with an eye towards assuring that that plan reflect the concerns and interests of the Black Community. Thus, when the School Department's December 16th plan became available to community groups around the first of this year, members of the Black Community were anxious that that plan be carefully evaluated from the Black perspective. Consequently, during the second week of January, the Freedom House Institute on Schools and Education assembled a group of about 15 Black community representatives and educational experts to prepare such an evaluation and to make recommendations regarding additions and revisions to the plan. The group came together for two all-day sessions hosted by the M.I.T. Department of Urban Studies and Planning. A list of community participants is attached.

In addition, Mr. Ron Edmonds and Mr. Kenneth Haskins, both of the Harvard Center for Urban Studies, who share a wide experience in the school desegregation area, provided technical expertise to the group.

The result of these planning sessions was a written critique and series of recommendations which will be presented to the Federal Court on February 3 and made available to citizens of Boston and in particular, members of the Black Community.

We want to thank all of those who participated in these sessions, and we give special thanks to Professor Frank Jones and Dr. Jerome Weisner of M.I.T. and to our technical advisers, Mr. Ron Edmonds and Mr. Kenneth Haskins.

Ellen S. Jackson, Director
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SUMMARY

The attached document is an initial Black Community response to the Desegregation Plan submitted by the School Department on December 16, 1974.

Our principal purpose is to make clear to the Court that in evaluating this plan, or any plan, we seek improvement in the quality of our children's schooling. We support efforts to rid the Boston schools of discriminatory pupil placement, but we do not seek racial balance or any rigid formula for fixing the racial proportions in school buildings. We believe that once discriminatory pupil placement is ended, probable instructional outcome should chiefly determine the character of all schools.

We have asked the Court to: verify the accuracy of the statistical data in the Plan; verify School Department capacity and intent to implement the options that are so essential to the Plan. We have also asked the Court to require procedures designed to prevent a variety of abuses that often attend desegregation. The procedures include: certification for, and placement in, special education classes; affirmative action; suspension and expulsion; multi-racial advisory bodies; police behavior on school grounds during school hours; extra-curricular activities; school-community relations; review of school policies, rules and regulations.

Certain questions are suggested to the Court in examining the proposed pupil assignments on a zone by zone basis.

The document closes by rejecting discussions of metropolitanism, at least, until discriminatory pupil placement has been eliminated in Boston.

I. INTRODUCTION

These remarks describe a hurried, but thoughtful, response to the "Student Desegregation Plan" of December 16, 1974. Our discussion is being prepared despite the uncertain status of the Plan in light of the most recent actions of the Boston School Committee and the District Court. Should further plans be submitted by the School Committee, we request the opportunity to submit further responses.

Our analysis of the Plan and consideration of the desegregation process proceeds from certain premises and preferences. In a just society, all citizens have access to the instruments of educational, social, political, and economic mobility. In a society such as ours, educations, social, political, and economic institutions are interdependent. Therefore, citizen access to each affects citizen access to all. Thus, efforts to effect greater institutional equity in education must reflect some appreciation of the educational influence of other major institutions in our society. Specifically, it cannot be assumed that Boston politicians, social leaders, or business leaders will support the quest for educational equity. We, therefore, ask the Court's assistance as we resist discriminatory actions intended to deny Black citizens certain of the rights and privileges of American citizenship. Our present pursuit of educational equity proceeds partly from our belief that educational mobility contributes to all other forms of mobility.

Since 1954, Black children have been legally entitled to an education that is free from discriminatory pupil placement. We thus support all actions necessary to deny to the Boston School Committee the means by which it has historically abused Black children. However, desegregation alone will not offer Black citizens that educational equity that must ultimately charac-

terize just and lasting relief from the segregation practiced by the Boston Public Schools.

In the name of equity, we, therefore, seek dramatic improvement in the quality of the education available to our children. We define educational equity as the absence of discriminatory pupil placement and improved performance for all children who have been the objects of discrimination.

II. ANALYSIS OF DECEMBER 16, 1974 SCHOOL COMMITTEE PLAN

In our analysis of the Plan, we have been compelled to seek evidence in support of School Committee intentions as set forth in the Plan. The Plan offers statistical information intended to describe city wide desegregation. The School Committee's history of discriminatory policy and its resistance to any efforts to overturn those policies suggests independent verification of the demographic data contained in the Plan. We, therefore, ask the Court to verify the accuracy of the statistical date that forms the basis for the Plan. We have noted, for example, pupil assignment to schools that do not now exist. We have noted, certain peculiarities in the racial classification of Latin students, and we have noted the School Department's observation that "...this data was not only outmoded due to the normal passage of time and resultant statistical aberrations, but also weakened by the impact of the Phase I Desegregation Plan on student enrollments in the school system."

The Desegregation Plan at issue seems chiefly characterized by a dramatic increase in instructional styles and types of school organization. Thus, while participating in desegregation, all Boston citizens would have access to varieties of instruction and classroom organization that have not

historically characterized the Boston schools.

Such an intent is admirable since our quarrel with the Boston schools partly proceeds from a denial of educational choices to school age Black children and their parents. Should the options set forward come to pass, the educational interests of all children in Boston will have been advanced. We think it important that the options actually be in place in September of 1975. Clearly, the options are intended to ease the rigors of desegregation by offering a set of choices, thus far, not available to most parents of school age children. Since desegregation itself places unusual demands on the Public Schools, we are especially mindful of whether or not Boston's resources are being directed to the work and planning prerequisite to the implementation of the options. Unfortunately, we failed to detect in the Plan evidence of the work that would need to immediately commence to implement the Plan options on schedule.

The racial tensions attendant to the School Committee's response to desegregation are widely acknowledged. The proposed options are described in the Plan "...as a means of restoring stability in our schools and hope in our citizens." It is cruel and irresponsible to cause Boston citizens to anticipate the options only to be disappointed. The disappointment would be doubly cruel since many Boston citizens with no historic interest in desegregation have long sought at least some of the proposed changes in the organization and operation of the Boston schools. It may be superflous to point out to the Court the extent to which actual desegregation depends on implementation of the options since Phase II desegregation depends on large numbers of parents and students choosing schools as a matter of program preference.

A. Reasons For Our Skeptism Of The Plan.

Now comes the question, which of the necessary actions prerequisite to implementation of the Plan's options can be anticipated on the basis of the information contained in the Plan? We must answer, few, if any. One of the first program options discussed in the Plan is titled "multi-cultural component." Among other observations, the Plan anticipates that the "multi-cultural component" will cause children to "...enjoy and appreciate their specific ethnic heritages, and to respect the identities of others." That is a noble intent and ought to have long characterized teaching and learning in the Boston schools. Realistic planning for such a city wide program component requires, among other things: review of textual materials to identify culturally autocratic materials and to acquire culturally democratic materials; curricular review anticipating the need to reorganize the presentation of certain subjects; staff training and recruitment anticipating the lack of multi-cultural instructional capacity among existing staff. This recitation could continue, but it may be sufficient to illustrate the source of certain of our concerns.

It must be assumed that school personnel who have practices segregation and, otherwise, have been educationally abusive must undertake nearly revolutionary reform to implement realistic recognition and appreciation of racial and ethnic differences. Since the School Committee has resisted the Court's efforts to abolish discriminatory pupil placement, we are forced to be skeptical in our acceptance of their willingness to implement the more profound educational reform inherent in their reference to a "multi-cultural component." We are equally skeptical of their intent to implement any of the options discussed in the Plan.

We have reviewed the Plan's Section VII (Implementation...) and fail to detect evidence of either an understanding of the program complexities or realistic intent to implement. The general references to "programmatic considerations" hardly suffice as program planning if the proposed options are to be in place by September on the basis of the various calendars in Section VII. It must be noted that certain of the dates have already passed and no evidence exists that even the activities mentioned in Section VII are underway. We must respectfully ask the Court to view with great skepticism the general and rhetorical nature of the program plans in Phase II. We ask the Court to ascertain the nature and substance of the School Committee's commitment to the options that are such an integral part of Phase II and are likely to be a part of any plan so heavily reminiscent of "freedom of choice".

B. Vocational Education/Cooperative Programs

A recent informal survey of 11 high schools offering Vocational Education/Cooperative Programs operating in Boston under the auspices of the Boston School Committee identified only 140 Black students out of 1122 students enrolled in these programs and 9 Black faculty out of 219 faculty. At the same time, Black students represent approximately 64% of the student population in grades 9-12 based on the enrollment projections in the Boston School Committee Plan of December 16, 1974. These facts indicate a need to increase the numbers of minority students involved in Vocational Education programs and to increase the numbers of Black faculty and administrators working in these programs. The following recommendations are made with the goal of making Vocational Education more accessible to the Black population of the city.

We would recommend that a comprehensive and written Vocational Education

Affirmative Action Program be ordered by the Court, developed by the Superintendent in conjunction with a Citizen's Advisory Committee, and adopted by the School Committee. The Advisory Committee should be composed of individuals and representatives from such groups as the Affirmative Action Task Force on Vocational Education and individuals from the Plaintiff Community.

The object of such action is to increase the number of Blacks employed at every level in vocational programs and to increase the numbers of Black pupils enrolled in these programs. Present practice in assigning pupils to Vocational Education must be rigorously examined of which more will be said later. In the area of employment, goals should be established for each Vocational Education Program to match the employment goals already established by the Court's faculty desegregation order. In the area of enrollment, the goal should be to cause Vocational Educational enrollment to match the percent of Black students enrolled overall in the Boston School System.

The following are some specific recommendations that should be considered for an Affirmative Action Program. To implement the Court's order that cooperative industrial programs be desegregated, we would suggest that:

1. All city-wide programs be relocated to Boston Trade.
2. That the ORC and all vocational programs be evaluated as to the scope and quality of present course offerings as compared to the size and scope of the Regional Vocational Schools operating in other parts of the Commonwealth, and that discrepancies in program quality be abolished. Such evaluation should be especially mindful of success in placing graduates in jobs.

3. That a comprehensive nationwide recruitment program for Black administrators and faculty in Vocational Education be conducted.
4. That the Boston School System establish a training program geared to retraining and upgrading all in Vocational Education.
5. That an Affirmative Action Program be required of every Vocational Education Program funded in the city of Boston prior to the city signing off on the State funding of these programs.
6. That brochures on Vocational Education specifically geared to Black and Spanish speaking be developed as part of an intensive minority student recruitment drive.
7. That a city-wide Advisory Council of Representatives from crafts, industry and commerce assist in any evaluation efforts.
8. That the above Affirmative Action Program be incorporated into the State Plan for Vocational Education.
9. That this Advisory Committee should act on an on-going basis after the establishment of a plan to monitor and evaluate its implementation.

Student Access

The Court order on Vocational Education of 8/27/74 outlined steps to be taken by the defendants to desegregate cooperative programs in the following schools: Charlestown, Boston Tech, Brighton, Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, and South Boston High School. The steps were as follows:

1. A recruitment program to identify minority students to include an individual notice and application form mailed

to each student: a waiting list for each cooperative program as vacancies occur or program withdraws.

2. Minority students are to be placed in cooperative programs until 40 percent of total enrollment constitute minority involvement or until the waiting list of minority students for the particular program has been exhausted.

Results

City Defendants Final Report on implementation of the 8/27/74 Vocational Education order showed the following:

Mailings	Applications	Offers	Acceptance
1080	70	70	40

Reported to School	Presently Attending Classes
32	24

Those schools identified as operating segregated cooperative programs have thus far failed to recruit minority students with the result that those programs in schools identified as segregated remain segregated.

SCHOOL	B	W	Oth	TOTALS
Brighton	53 20%	195 75%	12 05%	260
Charlestown	7 02%	320 97%	4 01%	331
Dorchester	25 28%	65 72%		
East Boston	2 03%	68 96%	1 01%	71
Hyde Park	11 10%	99 89%	1 1%	111
Jamaica Plain	40 38%	45 43%	19 18%	104
South Boston	2 01%	153 99%		155
Total	140	945	37	1,122

These figures show that the recruitment effort has failed to recruit minority students to a majority of the cooperative programs and that the current order to obtain the goal of 40% minority student enrollment in each program has not been reached.

Recommendations

1. All vacancies occuring in cooperative industrial programs should be filled by Black students until 40% enrollment has been reached.
2. Recruitment campaign should include:
   A. Mailing letters to Black students
   B. Distributing letters to students in class
   C. Additional counselling of Black students by minority guidance counselors.
3. All Black students should be notified in all 10th grade high schools throughout the system (currently recruitment limited to Boston Trade and ORC)

The above information suggests cooperative industrial programs from Charlestown, South Boston, East Boston be relocated to Boston Trade High School.

We do not agree with the Defendants to phase out the 11th and 12th grade students at Trade High School. The Trade High School has served for many students an alternative to education not offered in other Boston high schools. Also, it is not determined how the Boston School Department will educate those students now attending Boston Trade in the 1975 Desegregation Student Plan.

In addition to the Cooperative Industrial Programs, patterns of segregation exist in the Cooperative Distributive Education Programs as follows:

	BL	OTH	WHITE	TOTAL
Brighton	42	4	69	115
Charlestown High	0	0	127	127
Dorchester	128	2	51	181
East Boston	1	2	161	164
English High	63	0	48	111
Roxbury High	74	0	7	81
Hyde Park	172	0	207	379
Jamaica Plain	20	7	30	57
Jeremiah E. Burke	43	0	24	67
Roslindale High	5		46	51
S. Boston	0	0	28	28
TOTAL	548	15	798	1,361

Suggestions

1. The Court investigate Distributive Education programs within each school.
2. The court investigate job assignment programs within each school.
3. The court investigate wages of students job assignments.

C. Elements of Desegregation Not Mentioned In The Plan.

Turning now to matters that are of equal concern, we must note certain elements of successful desegregation that are not discussed in the Plan, rhetorically or otherwise. Much is known of the history of desegregation and the circumstances under which desegregation works well or poorly. School committees with patterns of racism and resistance to law, such as the Boston School Committee, must be prevented from subverting desegregation so as to make it a further opportunity to abuse Black children. Therefore, we suggest that the following matters should be considered in any plan:

1. The Court should skeptically examine all school practices that group children on the basis of presumed interest or ability. Next to discriminatory building assignment, no school practice is likely to be more antithetical to school desegregation than special education or advanced placement or similar groupings. Thus the Court should monitor not only the racial composition of buildings, but also that of classrooms. Such monitoring should explicitly include classrooms for the emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded. The Court should be mindful of the role of IQ tests, attitude measures, and like instruments in supporting racially discriminatory school practices. The Court should further assume that the means by which children are now certified disturbed or retarded are a source of abuse for Black children. We are not opposed to special classes for some children, but it is probably necessary to create new, more accurate and equitable means for certifying children emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded, or otherwise eligible for special classes.

2. The Court should impose firm affirmative action guidelines for all jobs in the school district. Racial balance among all school personnel, including administrators, teachers, counselors, clerical personnel, and custodians is among the lease complicated of the School Committee's obligations. In addition to affirmative action, the Court should assume that Black personnel will be subject to arbitrary and capricious treatment unless the Court monitors the promotion, demonition, and dismissal of school personnel.

3. The Court should require written, uniform policy for student rights, including our process provisions governing suspension and expulsion. Such policy should be adopted by the School Committee or ordered by the Court and uniformly applied in every educational setting under the jurisdiction of the School Committee. Patterns of suspension and expulsion since September already affirm discriminatory school practice.

4. The Court should cause the creation of a multiplicity of multi-racial groups to monitor school practice and advise on educational matters. Precedent suggests that such groups include one district-wide group and one group per school. Racial composition should be as nearly equal as possible, with selection being a function of secret ballots for parents and secondary students. The Court should assure such groups two characteristics: access to information on school practice, and access to the School Committee. We acknowledge existence of such groups in Phase I and urge that they be improved and continued in Phase II.

5. There should be written policy governing the behavior of police on school grounds during the school hours. During the early days of desegregation the police may seem so necessary that one forgets how troublesome they can be in the normal operation of a school. Many school districts have model codes governing who can call the police and how they must exercise their authority in dealing with students on school property during school hours. The object here is to prevent the school from being accomplice to any police abuse of student rights.

6. All extra-curricular activities, athletic and otherwise, should be open to all students. Some activities, such as cheerleading, may require special provisions to insure minority participation. It is best that such matters be attended to before they become sources of tension and frustration.

7. The Court should identify or cause to exist school personnel who are especially mindful of school-community relations. Such personnel are variously known as human relations directors, community liason, ombudsman, etc. The purpose is internal monitoring of school operation to identify school personnel, policies and practices that are abusive or needlessly abrasive.

8. All school practices, policies, rules and regulations should be examined to ascertain which may be sources of tension and possible student unrest. Multi-racial schools work best when school personnel are not defensive. Thus it is essential that the school avoid institutional behaviors that are needlessly or avoidably provocative. It is in this context that in-service or re-training efforts might be conceived for <u>all</u> school personnel.

It should be emphasized that none of the preceding minimal and procedural safeguards are mentioned in the Plan. We urge the Court to cause the implementation of all of the foregoing and such others as may seem necessary or proper. School systems, like Boston, that abuse some of its students must, at certain times, and in some ways, abuse all of their students. Thus securing the rights of minority students must end by securing the rights of all students.

D. Questions To Consider In Determining Whether the Proposed Zones Conform To The Courts October 31, 1974 Guidelines.

Turning now to the six zones proposed in the Plan, we ask the Court to consider certain questions in evaluating whether, and to what extent, the zones conform to the guidelines contained in the Court's order of October 31, 1974.

Is the anticipated pupil transportation equitably shared by Black and White children of comparable age?

Do the programs to which students are being transported suggest racial equity in pupil assignments?

Are students previously moved given every practical consideration in deciding who must be reassigned?

Do routes taken and other aspects of pupil transportation reflect due consideration for pupil safety?

Does the racial composition of the staff of receiving schools reflect not only conformity to affirmative action guidelines, but attention to the receptive school climate to which children are entitled?

Have staff for various program, instructional, and organizational options been assigned in a manner best designed to successfully implement the options on which Phase II depends?

Do school closings in the zones reflect criteria other than race?

Our concerns may be illustrated by a few specific observations.

Designating Roxbury High an annex to Copley, relocating Boston High in Boston Trade, restricting the Latin School to grades 9-12, and similar provisions would avoid certain of the dislocations in Zone I plans and would reflect a greater concern for community preference. Zone II's dependence on the availability of the Bayside Mall site does not reflect attention to contingencies and has the effect of permitting the School Department to contend that failure to fully implement the Zone II Plan was due to circumstances beyond their control.

E. Metropolitanism Should Not Be Considered.

The discussion of "Metropolitan Concerns" may well be the most disheartening in the entire Plan. In our view, Section VIII combines insincere moral exhortation, an implied description of the Court's authority that is grossly distorted, and a number of suggestions that the Boston schools can independently pursue, which means they need not be in the Plan.

That suburban communities have moral obligations in matters of race is not an issue. That the Boston schools should exhort the suburbs, on moral grounds, can only be viewed as an effort to distract attention from a crisis created and sustained by the Boston schools.

The Boston schools have never historically advanced the educational interests of Black children, even on occasions of suburban cooperation as in Metco. The racial isolation that is deplored in the suburbs must not obscure the housing and employment discrimination that characterizes Boston and its schools. The Plan's discussion of these matters would have seemed much more sincere had reference been made to the need for open housing and employment in Boston as well as its suburbs.

The primary goal of Boston's advocacy of metropolitanism is "The reduction of racial, economic, and ethnic isolation..." The Black community will not abandon its commitment to improved schooling to support Boston's interest in reducing the number of Black children in its schools. It is irresponsible of the Boston schools to suggest that long range improvement in the Boston schools depends on suburban willingness to reduce Black pupil enrollment in Boston.

It may be well to note here that we regard, virtually, the entire public discussion of metropolitanism over the last several months as a mischievous diverting of attention from the obligation of the Boston schools to cease abuse of its Black students. It may be proper to publicly discuss these matters, but not at a time when the city's energy should be concentrated on interrupting the illegal and irresponsible behavior of its school committee. We can, and do, support voluntary, Black access to suburban schools. It is unfortunate that the voluntary aspect of that access is diminished largely because the Boston schools have historically refused to offer minimally effective instruction to Black children. Thus Black parents have lacked a key element necessary to make Metco and similar programs truly voluntary. When the Boston schools meet their obligation to offer effective instruction, Black children can then be sent to suburban schools for reasons other than the quest for a decent basic education. For as long as the Boston schools remain pathological, it will be impossible to tell whether Black parents participate in Metco to avoid Boston or because they like suburbs.

We urge the Court to entertain no recommendation that will divert the resources of the Boston schools to suburban concerns unless, and until, the Boston schools have demonstrated their willingness to meet their obligation

to the citizens and children of the city.

It is a further indictment of Section VIII to point out that all seventeen of the metropolitan recommendations ask the Court to take action well beyond its jurisdiction. The Court must view with skepticism any discussion dominated by recommended Court actions directed to suburbs and state agencies over which the Court has no present jurisdiction. We cannot view it as helpful that the Boston schools would make public a document implying that the Court has any basis for directing the actions of parties that are not involved in the instant case.

We must especially deplore the Boston schools' recommendation that suburbs be required to import Black pupils in sufficient numbers to make suburban schools 4% Black. The recommendation is not only ridiculous, but racist in its implied aversion to Black children. We, again, urge the Court not to dignify any part of Section VIII by treating the suggestions as anything but irresponsible and diversionary.

In sum, we think it proper to entertain metropolitan schemes only after the Boston schools have ceased their discriminatory behavior by desegregating. To entertain such schemes while desegregation is in progress is to give Boston one more excuse for continuing to avoid its legal and moral obligations.

In our view, we are now in what we call the "police phase" of desegregation. Communities as disparate as Charlotte and Pontiac make clear that an early issue that must be faced in court ordered desegregation is the citizen's sense of whether or not desegregation is inevitable. Court orders of any kind, including desegregation, are inevitable, partly because police

authority, local, state, and national is constitutionally bound to enforce such orders. The "police phase" of Boston's desegregation will end when Boston's citizens are finally persuaded that law will prevail. The word "never", first used in the South, has present currency in this city. Large numbers of Boston citizens continue to direct their attention not to how Boston will desegregate, but whether it will do so. By its actions, the Boston School Committee leads resistance to law and good order. Such actions must continue to menace the social fabric of this community. Those of us who are concerned with "how best to desegregate" urge the Court to view with disdain any further discussion that implies that we may not desegregate.

Since the Court had earlier entertained general discussion of metropolitan desegregation, it might be informative to offer a few remarks on our general perspective.

Prevailing opinion among some civil rights organizations and many educational researchers proceeds from the premise that good schooling requires that middle class White children be in a numerical majority in every school. Income, social class, and to a lesser degree color are presumed to cause the level of pupil performance. A preponderance of middle class white pupils is presumed to cause improved performance for such poor Black children as may be enrolled in such a school. Conversely, a preponderance of poor Black pupils in a school is presumed to depress the levels of performance. Thus metropolitan desegregation is advocated to make Black children a perpetual minority.

We reject such views and proceed from the analysis that <u>school response</u> to income, social class, and color is chief cause of the levels of pupil performance. Such analysis directs attention to manipulation of the school if

the object is educational betterment.

Now comes the question, will legally desegregated, but potentially imbalanced schools in Boston advance the best interests of the affected Black children?

In our view, the answer is "yes". We do not mean to suggest that, in and of itself, desegregation within Boston will improve the quality of schooling for Black children. We do mean to suggest that in the struggle to attain educational equity for Black children, desegregation within Boston is a greater opportunity for educational betterment than would be the case with involuntary metropolitan desegregation.

In discussing the educational abuse of Black children, the issue is not remedy absent struggle, but remedy defining the most auspicious struggle. We earlier stated that improved pupil performance must be our principal object in designing and implementing desegregation arrangements affecting Black pupils. It is in that context that we reject "metropolitan" relief in the instant case.

The quality of schooling offered Black children is, and has been, principally a function of the politics of educational decision making. That is so because our failure to equitably educate Black children proceeds not from educator ignorance, but from instruments of political authority that do not impose instructional accountability on those who teach Black children.

Thus educational equity for Black children must await greater Black access to the instruments of decision making in public schooling. Metropolitan desegregation has no role in our immediate quest for educational equity in Boston.

To be just as well as legal, court ordered desegregation must eliminate discriminatory pupil placement while assuring to the greatest degree possible improved performance for those children whose abuse is the object of our attention. We think these ends best advanced by concentrating our immediate attention on Boston.

F. Additional Recommendations And Conclusion.

We close by suggesting to the Court the means by which desegregation might better serve the educational interest of Boston's children.

Citizen opportunity to obtain general information is severely limited. It, therefore, goes without saying that citizens have never possessed reasonably accurate description of the quality of schooling in our city. Since the Court seeks to protect and advance our rights, we urge the Court to provide a more lasting legacy than demographic desegregation. Our struggle will continue after the Court has departed and what we seek is information that will better permit us to represent our own interests.

We ask the Court to order, or cause to come to pass community, educator, description of minimal mastery of basic school skills. Specifically, parents, teachers, and other parties to public schooling would set down a description of those bodies of knowledge and sets of skills that describe pupil mastery of each of the elementary grades. Such a description would then form the basis for School Department development of a set of assessment instruments to measure present pupil progress.

Early in the 1975-76 school year, pupil mastery of basic skills would be assessed and publicly reported. Early in the 1976-77 school year, the next assessment would occur and again be publicly reported. The object is

to permit any and all citizens to judge the quality of instruction in each of the school buildings in Boston. Such public reporting of pupil progress on a building basis would give us a proper basis for judging whether and to what extent racial balance in Boston can, or should, be tempered in the name of instructional effectiveness.

Also in recent weeks, there has been considerable public discussion of "alternative sites" or "neutral turf" referring to the possible locating of certain troubled high schools in settings whose environs would not further student tensions. Reference has been made to a number of settings, including downtown and suburban. Since we are mindful of the Court's interest in public discussions, we are anxious to convey Black community perspectives on these discussions.

We would, of course, prefer that all Boston schools remain open and free from tension. We recognize that certain Boston communities have expressed attitudes and taken actions that have measurably exacerbated already tense circumstances. We, therefore, appreciate circumstances that may compel continued consideration of "alternative sites". Should such discussion come before the Court, we urge that certain safeguards be observed.

First, it cannot be assumed that the Boston School Department or Committee would recommend or recognize a genuinely neutral site. If the extent is a setting that does not further tension, it will be essential that the Black community participate in defining "neutral". It will be equally important that the Black community have the opportunity to respond to any proposed alternative site. We make these suggestions in the belief that the School Department criteria in defining neutral or recommending sites would not adequately reflect the interests of all parties that might be

affected by such discussions.

We must emphasize our hope that no further discussion of these matters will be necessary. We neither seek nor advocate the closing of any Boston schools. We would prefer that educational decision makers create and maintain an educational climate that is free from tension and characterized by good order and effective instruction.

We applaud the demise of segregation in Boston and anticipate an eventual improvement in the quality of schooling for all children in Boston. We implore the Court to entertain our concern for quality and the means by which it might be obtained for all our children.

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